LESSON 5
Amy Sherald
Portraits and Value

Verbal Directions
LESSON OVERVIEW

Amy Sherald (born 1973) is an American painter living in Baltimore, Maryland. She is best known for her portrait paintings. She paints people from her community to share her perspective and tell African-American stories. Students will learn about value drawing and how to share their own identity through a self-portrait.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

• Learn about Amy Sherald, her life, influences and artwork.
• Study diverse perspectives in art making.
• Explore illustrating daily life experiences in art.
• Learn about value drawing.
• Create a self-portrait that tells an individual story.

AMY SHERALD

Amy Sherald (born 1973) is from Columbus, Georgia, and has always loved drawing. She says it is something that she works hard at but comes easy to her. She took art classes in school and lessons after school. Art was not very popular in her family. Her parents wanted her to become a doctor. Instead she chose to wait tables until she was 38 to support her art career. In her painting she works from photographs of strangers she encounters on the street in her community. She likes to paint people that look like her and didn’t always find great examples to inspire her in the art history books. She wants her paintings to be seen as Americans doing everyday American things. Learn More
LESSON PLAN

1. Discuss the portraits by Amy Sherald. Explain to students that she is a living artist who is currently making artwork today in Baltimore Maryland. Discuss other portrait artist from art history and think about what makes her painting style unique. Ask students:
   - What do you first notice about the way Amy Sherald draws people? Describe her portraits.

2. Talk about her subjects: who she chooses to paint and how she chooses to paint skin tones without color, in black and white. Ask students:
   - Why do you think she uses color only in the background and clothing?
   - Why do artists use shading?

3. On a piece of scratch paper, show a value scale. Demonstrate how to create a range of greys, or different values, from light to dark by varying the pressure on the pencil. Pass out paper so that students can practice and continue to emphasize that values in a drawing can create the illusion of three dimensions and realism.

3. Pass out drawing paper. Students will create a self-portrait. Discuss how to start a self-portrait, drawing first the shape of the head, then the basic proportions and placement of features (use worksheet). Add a neck and shoulders.

4. Instruct students to add shading to the face. Start with a tone over the entire face matching the students skin tone, then add additional values around the nose and mouth, to show shadows. Using the eraser students can highlight the cheeks and nose and the white of the eyes.

5. Encourage students to add an outfit that shows their identity. They can use color pencils (or patterned paper) to add color to the outfit and background. Optional: cut out portrait and paste it on a bold color background.

EVA+: Amy Sherald often painted people in outfits from local vintage stores or hats from a friend's family collection. Have students consider their favorite outfit, or a piece of clothing that truly represents them. Use a template of a figure or manikin that students can use as a starting point to add a clothing design. This design can be imagined, symbolic or real clothes that they cherish. Have students consider the color, pattern and details.
KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:
Based on National Core Arts Standards visual Arts Requirements (3rd Grade).

**VA:Cr3.1.3a:** Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance emerging meaning.

**VA:Re8.1.3a:** Interpret art by analyzing use of media to create subject matter, characteristics of form, and mood.

**VA:Re.7.2.3a:** Determine messages communicated by an image.

STUDIO HABITS OF THE MIND:
Observe: Learning to attend to visual contexts more closely than ordinary “looking” requires, and thereby to see things that otherwise might not be seen.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES
Click on links to learn more.
- https://www.hauserwirth.com/artists/11577-amy-sherald
- https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/amy-sherald
- https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2016/art-talk-painter-amy-sherald
- https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2016/art-talk-painter-amy-sherald
- https://i.pinimg.com/originals/9bad77d5cdd576edce73ef8d9a0427e3.jpg